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SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION: THE SYRIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM, REJECTION
OF THE HAMAS DEAL, AND PALESTINIAN SUFFERING.

11. SUMMARY: Private Arabic daily "Al-Watan" writes that America is falling into another Israeli trap over the allegations of Syria's nuclear program, warning against blind support for Israel. State Arabic daily "Oman" criticized Israel for rejecting the Hamas peace proposal. "Al-Watan" also called on the international community to give equal weight to Palestinian suffering as to suffering caused by poverty or food scarcity. END SUMMARY.

"DESPERATE EFFORTS" AGAINST SYRIA

12. On April 26, the privately owned Arabic "Al-Watan" (circulation 42,000) suggested that America is being led astray by Israel, seeing "Signs of a New Chapter of Pressure on Syria":

"The American addiction to support of Israel is drawing the U.S. into another scandal. It is strange to see the desperate efforts from Washington to prove that there is nuclear cooperation between Syria and North Korea, only one day after Israel's statement that it is ready to return the Golan Heights to Syria. It is also surprising that the allegations against Syria explain all of America's and Israel's problems in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine. It is unfortunate to find many writers (some Arab) that support these lies. They isolate Syria from its Arab neighbors and will link it to global terror. However, what is even more surprising is Israel's cynicism and bitterness, given its own nuclear programs, weapons and warheads ready for use against the Arabs since the October 1973 war. No one, though, has denounced Israel; not even the International Atomic Energy Agency has questioned the facts of Israel's Demona reactors."

ISRAEL PREEMPTS PEACE IN GAZA

13. Government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) accused the Israelis of denying peace overtures in order to escalate violence in Gaza. On April 28, "The Israeli Rejection for Calming Harms the Region" said:

"At a time of ongoing suffering in the region, a glimmer of hope emerged as a proposal to calm the situation in the Gaza Strip, with plans to later include the West Bank. However, the Olmert government rejected the proposal immediately, without consideration. It is clear that the Olmert government decided not only to preempt moves to bring peace to Gaza, but also to continue escalating its operations, which will further push the situation towards an explosion. It is clear that Israel intended to maneuver and to procrastinate because it simply does not want to calm the situation

in Gaza. Israel does not want a peace based on international legitimacy, the Arab peace initiative, the Road Map, or United Nations resolutions."

A DOUBLE STANDARD ON SUFFERING?

¶4. On April 28, "Al-Watan" compared the attention of international organizations to the Palestinians to that accorded to victims of food shortages. "When Will the World's Conscience Notice the Tragedy of the Palestinians?" asked:

"As regional and international organizations show their concern on issues of poverty and food scarcity, they claim to care about all suffering of all the poor around the world. But, we wonder: Why do these organizations and international groups not consider the Palestinian crisis? As a result of the Israeli blockade and the efforts by Israel to increase the suffering of an entire people, Palestine is suffering economic stagnation. Many countries and nations have promised to support the Palestinians through a program developed in Paris in December 2007, but implementation is impossible... What is the point of this ongoing propaganda alleging that there is an international commitment to assist the Palestinian people? Would shame show itself on the faces of those who claim to be morally committed to Palestinian issues?"

GRAPPO